

# Hazbin Hotel Season One Spoiler-Filled Review



*Hazbin Hotel* is a mature animated series by Vivienne Medrano. It began as an indie animation by Medrano and her company, SpindleHorse Toons, along with *Helluva Boss* not long later, with both in the same universe. The franchise began as a YouTube pilot [in October 2019](#) and garnered over ninety-four million views. Most recently, it was developed into a full-fledged animated series by the aforementioned company, A24, Bento Box Entertainment, and Amazon MGM Studios. It premiered on January 18th of this year with a four-episode drop. As a warning, this review will discuss racism, and mature themes such as murder, sex, pornography, and sexual assault.

This animated series primarily centers on Charlotte "Charlie" Morningstar (voiced by Erika Henningsen), a Princess of Hell, and her girlfriend, Vaggie (voiced by Stephanie Beatriz). They run a hotel which tries to redeem sinners, known as the Happy Hotel, a task which no one seems to believe in. Charlie herself is bisexual, while her girlfriend is a lesbian. Their first occupant, Alastor (voiced by Amir Talai), is asexual and is known as the Radio Demon. Other hotel guests include gay pornstar Anthony "Angel" Dust (Blake Roman), bartender Husk (voiced by Keith David), hyperactive cyclops demon and resident maid/housekeeper Nifty (voiced by Kimiko Glenn), and Sir Pentious (voiced by Alex Brightman) later on.

The first episode begins with the "official" Heaven/Hell story: Heaven was ruled by angels who worshiped God and shielded all evil. One angel was Lucifer (voiced by Jeremy Jordan). Heaven's elders saw him as a troublemaker. He fell in love with Lilith (like Eve in Adam & Eve). Both wished to share the magic of free will with humanity. However, this gift was "a curse," with this disobedience bringing "evil" to Earth. A new world of sin and darkness was created. Heaven's order was shattered. Lilith and Lucifer were banished to this new realm, called "Hell." Lilith thrived, empowering demons through her voice. Lucifer stopped dreaming. Heaven heartlessly decided to send down an extermination army every year so that Hell couldn't rise against them. Even so, the light of hope remained in her daughter, Charlie. Hence, it inspired her idea of a hotel (later named Hazbin Hotel, the series namesake).

This story is clearly a biblical allegory, [resulting in shrieks](#) from reactionary groups and individuals that the series is "satanic." Some said this echoed the "satanic panic" during the 1970s and 1980s. Of course, the claims by such individuals and groups are absurd and ridiculous. They are an effort to whoop people into a frenzy over nothing. The series creates a world absent of belief of purity, fate, and the gender binary, going against traditional Christian values. Characters within Hell are never shown as innocent. So, to say it is Satanic propaganda, or something of the like, shows [how ridiculous](#) such people are, and why their views, including about pop culture media, should never be trusted or believed, in the slightest. This series is indicative of [possible changes](#) in the mature animation [sphere](#).

Back to the first episode, you get a sense of the character dynamics, especially between Charlie and Alastor, Niffty and Husk and Alastor (the latter forced the former to be there) or Angel wanting them to use his sexual "talents." Charlie rejects Angel's offer politely. Vaggie rejects it more forcefully. Since this series is a musical, Charlie sings on her way to the Heaven's embassy in Hell. She plans to meet with the Angelic Army leader and hopes to spare demons from Heaven's genocide. On the way, she goes through blood-filled streets, with a litany of perversion and death. She tries to negotiate with Adam (voiced by Alex Brightman), almost out of the "Adam and Eve" story. In this world, he "created" humans, but is an utter jerk. He declares that extermination is entertainment, that Hell is "forever," and that they will return sooner than expected for their genocidal campaign.

This failed action by Charlie parallels Vaggie trying to make a new commercial for the hotel. You can feel Vaggie's anger, when she speaks Spanish, and is fed up that the commercial is ending badly. It hooks you, with the terror over the upcoming slaughter, and the news that an angel has died (they are supposed to be "immortal"). Adam tells them to not reveal this, so those in Hell don't catch

on. Adam's privileged attitude, even coming through his hologram when speaking to Charlie, reminds me of what White Diamond tells Steven in *Steven Universe: The Movie*. She tells him that the Diamonds don't want to stay on Earth because it is "so disgusting." She called Gems "lower life forms." He corrects her to say "equal life forms." While he helps the Diamonds unlearn their imperialistic mindsets, no such person in Heaven exists for Adam.

The second episode goes even further. Vaggie tries to comfort Charlie, while Sir Pentious (voiced by Alex Brightman) enters the scene, determined to kill Alastor. They have their turf war, of sorts, making clear both are jerks, in their own way. Vox (voiced by Christian Borle) runs a huge entertainment company named VoxTex, and has Velvette (voiced by Lilli Cooper) as his assistant, tries to send in Pentious as a spy, as he has it out for Alastor (his rival). This fails as the camera which Pentious placed is discovered, even after he demands to be immediately evacuated. He is welcomed to the hotel by Charlie, who sings about forgiveness, and calls him their "first real guest," even as he says he doesn't deserve their amnesty. Previously, he was pressured by Charlie to apologize to Alastor.

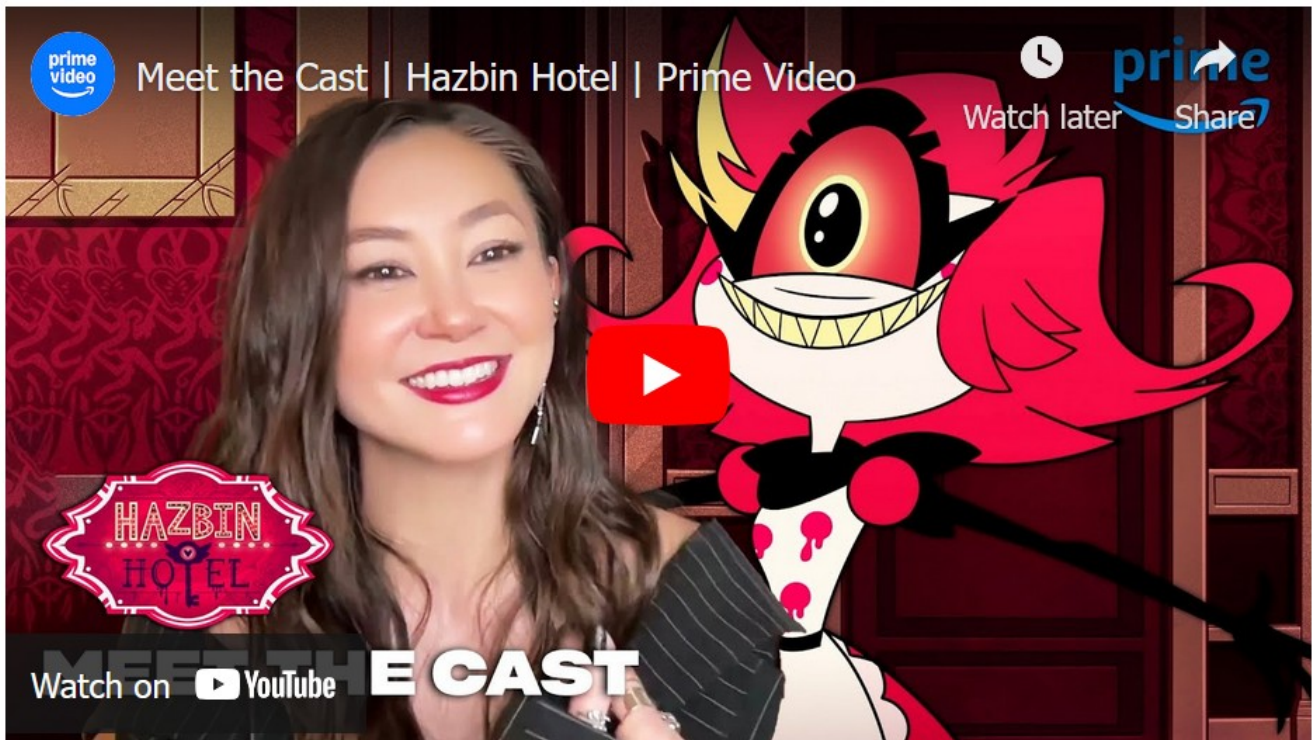
Despite the fact that Vox has control of screens, including televisions, to blare out his message, even to fool inhabitants with a "new" program named Angellic Security which is non-existent, he is defeated by Alastor. The power of the radio reigns supreme over screens. This contrasts to how screens were used as a tool to expose wrongdoers in many other series, whether the final episodes of [\*Villainous\*](#), [\*The Vexations of a Shut-In Vampire Princess\*](#), and *Iwájú*. This battle between a master of radio and a master of television goes on, with Vox angry when Alastor smashes a watch with a TV screen on it. It contrasts with Angel listening to harassing and supportive messages from his boss, Valentino, on his cell phone.

The next, and third, episode of *Hazbin Hotel* is a bit all-over-the-place. But, it sets in motion plotlines which impact the series going forward. Carmilla Carmine (voiced by Daphne Rubin-Vega) tells Velvette to show her "some respect" when she brings in an angel's head to a meeting of the sovereign overlords of Hell. Each demon represents a part of the city, owning millions of souls. Each overlords sees a risk at the new extermination schedule, with the previous genocide killing 16% of the population, more brutal than the past. There's even a music battle between Velvette, who seems to favor dramatic action (presumably an invasion of Heaven), and Carmilla, who is much more cautious. At the same time, Charlie attempts to encourage the hotel's guests to trust each other more.

However, in the process, a schism between Charlie and Vaggie begins to form. Vaggie declares that the way to earn trust is to fight on the battlefield but Charlie disagrees. This goes even further:

Vaggie declares she is worthless and no use to Charlie. Later, she signs a duet-of-sorts with Carmilla, with each of them exposing their own struggles, with Vaggie saying she will do whatever she can to support Charlie and remain her partner for life. They both make up, realizing that they need to work through their problems while they are together, rather than apart. It turns out that Vaggie's exercise worked, with everyone in the hotel appearing to get along with one another.

One of the episode's most significant parts is the fact that Carmilla killed an Angel! She wants to hide it so that her daughters, who [are ballerina assassins](#), will be protected from harm. Alastor learns this secret thanks to one of Pentious's egg-soldiers. While the latter reveals to Pentious that Carmilla killed the angel, he writes it off as some fantasy. Clearly he doesn't believe it and thinks they are just saying this, and doesn't tell anyone else about it. This becomes even more important by the seventh episode.



(watch on: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqQvrKp\\_YIQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqQvrKp_YIQ))

*Hazbin Hotel's* fourth episode has become controversial in social media circles. This isn't because Charlie tries to stop Angel from being exploited or that Angel yells at her for butting her nose in "where it doesn't belong." Instead, it's the fact that Angel is enslaved to Valentino. He owns him as property, while he does pornographic shoots, many of which are awful and exploitative. Effectively, he is trapped in a contract. The series hints at terrible working conditions for those in the real-life sex

industry are (and implied this is the case elsewhere). Angel sold "his soul" to Valentino, a demon he calls a "psychopathic freak." In the process, he bonds with the hotel's bartender, Husk, a former overlord who gambled and dealt in souls. They sing the song "Loser Baby," saying that people are losers and living in a messed up world together.

After watching this episode, some social media users complained about having Angel dance "sexilly and joyfully" to assault. Such comments missed the episode's point entirely and show clear media illiteracy. Angel is enslaved to his boss and has to do this work. His "joy" is manufactured and fake. His dancing is all for performance and is supposed to make people feel uncomfortable. It doesn't fetishize or romanticize sexual assault, but shows its horrid nature and how people can be forced into these situations (i.e. in the sex industry) where they feel they have to be assaulted. Once again, it should be a reminder than any discourse about this series should be dismissed out of hand, due to a strong hatred and bad misreading of the series, at the very least. The series should, undoubtedly, be criticized, but not in this faulty manner.

Following this episode, I sympathized more with Angel and Husk, as much as Charlie and Vaggie. In general, the show's characters are horrible beings. That's the point. Charlie exudes toxic positivity, ignoring her own problems and helps solve other people's issues instead. This led some to compare her to Rapunzel in *Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure*, who has similar issues. While this show is very [woman-centered](#), focused on queer experiences and healing, and doesn't fall into the good-evil dynamic easily, similar themes appear in *Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure*. In fact, Keith David, Christian Borle, James Monroe Iglehart and Jeremy Jordan also voiced characters in that series. The latter two voiced Lance Strongbow and Varian!

A lot happens in *Hazbin Hotel*'s fifth episode. Charlie's family conflict comes to the center. She tries to impress her dad, Lucifer, who happily accepts the fact she has a girlfriend. Previously, she didn't have good relations with him after he and her mom divorced. He says he will help spruce help the hotel. Alastor tries to outdo him. It's even said, at one point, that a chosen family is better than a birth family. By the episode's end, Charlie admits that she was inspired by her father's lofty dreams, even though her mom took her away from her dad. They [sing a duet](#), with [hopes](#) they can start over. Lucifer commits himself to fulfilling her dreams. He says he can get her a meeting in Heaven but can't go with her. Uncharacteristically, Vaggie is nervous about this meeting, for reasons which are explained later in this review.



This episode features Mimzy (voiced by Sarah Stiles). She claims that Alastor is a "total sweetie" but ends up causing damage to the hotel. Some claimed that she's Jewish or a fat stereotype. In reality, she's a terrible person who stole money from loan sharks. People have a reason to dislike her. She is very annoying, even worse than Steven Universe early on in Season 1 of that series. This show's social media discourse is poisoned by bad-faith takes, often by haters, and those reading too much into the series. Each character has problems. Furthermore, Mimzy especially doesn't care about the hotel's mission while the other residents are coming around to it. Others cringe at the fact Vaggie's name is a joke nickname after a "vagina" as revealed by Adam in episode six. This does not take away from her character's strengths.

As for Alastor, some [criticized](#) the fact that Husk's soul is owned by him, arguing that it is problematic that the "only" Black-coded character in the cast is enslaved to him, noting that Alastor is a slaveowner. While I understand that perspective, Alastor, whose human design [has a skin tone](#) which resembles Haitian Creole people, is never portrayed as a positive character. Unlike Vaggie and Charlie, or even Husk and Angel, it is near-impossible to sympathize with him. The fact he is a slaveowner is not unique. Valentino effectively enslaved Angel. Such power relations are not uncommon in the world of *Hazbin Hotel*. Alastor is power hungry, literally [eliminating overlords](#), who got in the way, with his radio broadcasts.

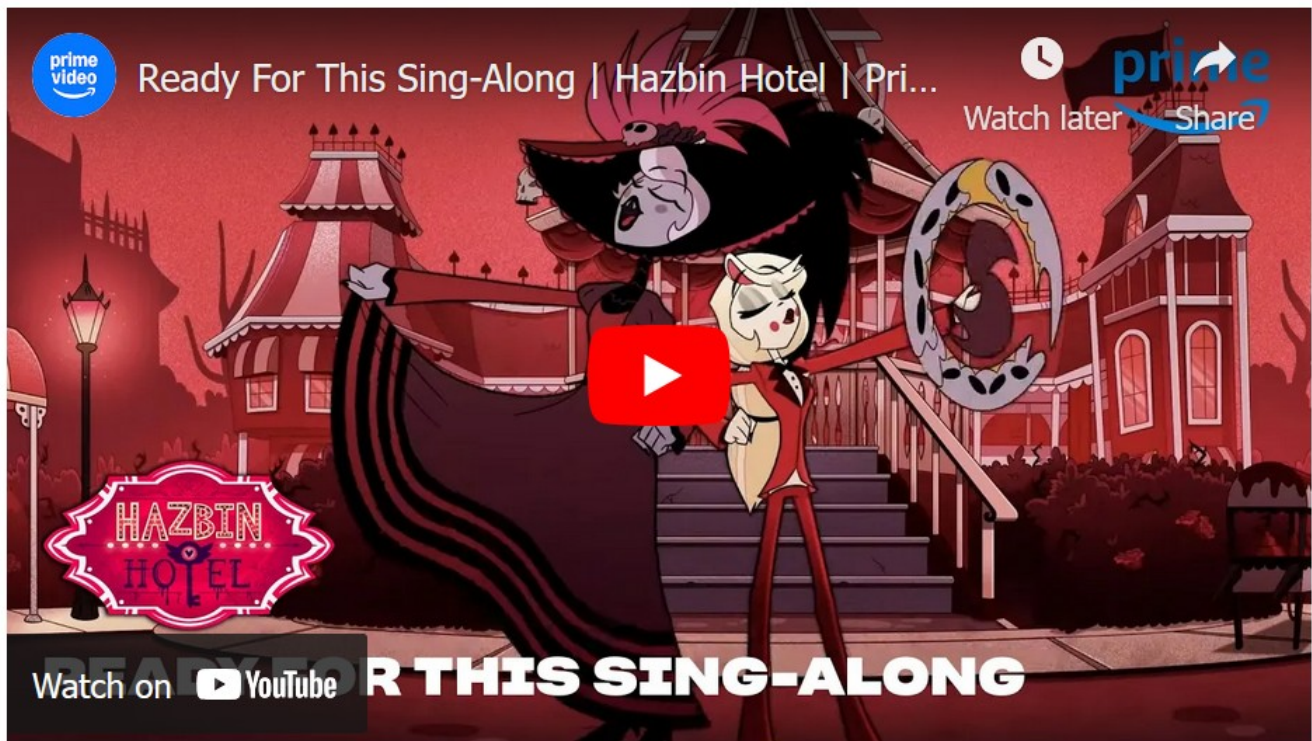
The sixth episode has the [big reveal](#), while Angel Dust's friend, Cherri Bomb (voiced by Krystina Alabado), comes onto the scene. Charlie goes to Heaven. It's a place said to be "perfect" with no strife, burglaries, or worries. Adam is told to make sure this problem doesn't get worse. This includes threatening Vaggie, including revealing her secret: that she killed thousands of demons as an angelic exterminator. When she didn't want to kill, her eye was cut out, and she put a patch over her eye. Charlie [saved her](#). At first, Vaggie departs rather than defending Charlie, due to Adam's threat. Charlie ends up showing that people in Hell can improve. Although Emily agrees with her, the court in Heaven, composed [of Angels](#), declares that there's *no evidence* that souls in Hell can be redeemed. This is a total victory for Adam and utter defeat for Charlie.

Charlie is horrified to learn that Vaggie is an angelic exterminator. However, she finds a new ally of sorts in Emily (voiced by Shoba Narayan), the daughter of Sera (voiced by Patina Miller), one of [Heaven's](#) high-ranking officials. In fact, Emily sings a duet with Charlie. More powerfully, she stands up to Sera, exposing her hypocrisy, noting that Sera isn't heeding her own morals after she learns about the extermination (she was never told). Although Adam declares he will be in Hell in a month,

with the Hazbin Hotel as his target, Emily still objects to the extermination. Responding like a repressive ruler, Sera declares that an uprising in Hell "forced" them to bring down the iron fist. She tries to pressure Emily into silence, telling her to let this matter go, although it is obvious that she won't.

In the seventh episode, Vaggie and Charlie are not speaking after the previous episode's "big reveal." The hotel's residents rib Vaggie over being an angel, while she defends Charlie's actions, saying she's trying her best. This directly contrasts with Charlie who's crying and sulking in her room, unsure what to do and how to face anyone after failing so badly. She believes she gave people more pain and is as bad, if not worse, than the cruelest overlord in Hell. Even Alastor, one of *Hazbin Hotel's* most despicable characters (which is why some fans like his character), is surprised by her self-loathing, brought on because Vaggie lied to her.

Due to Vaggie's absence, Charlie makes a dangerous decision: she makes a deal with Alastor. He wants one favor from her at the time of his choosing. While Vaggie is horrified, Charlie passed off her concern, informing her that angels can be defeated. She tells Vaggie to bring in Carmilla, so they can learn how to kill angels. With both separated, Vaggie tells them to prepare for battle. Charlie meets Rosie, who aptly calls Alastor an "ace in the hole" ([hinting](#) at his asexuality), and offers her creature-eaters to fight off the invaders. Charlie wins them over after Rosie tells her that Vaggie was trying to redeem herself. Vaggie and Carmilla fight one another, with Carmilla saying you can't become an angelic arms dealer without arming yourself first. True to the show's form, they sing a duet, with upbeat Latina style music playing.



(watch on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1yNk8VeqqI>)

The episode has a positive conclusion. Charlie successfully pitches her hotel to the residents of "Cannibal Town." Ominously, Alastor declares he wants to guide Charlie. Rosie says she will stick with Charlie because she will "be on the winning side." Charlie and Vaggie make up, embracing one another. The hotel's residents/guests prepare for an invasion. This *Hazbin Hotel* episode reminds me of the line from the Robot Devil, who interrupts from Fry's opera *in Futurama's* Season 4 finale ("The Devil's Hands Are Idle Playthings"). He sings, in response to Fry: "a deal's a deal, even with a dirty dealer." Alastor is a dirty dealer without a doubt, meaning he may have something up his sleeve.

The season one finale ends with a bang. Everyone prepares for the battle. Charlie leads preparations to fight the angels. Vaggie toasts to them not dying the next day. All the while, Vox, Alastor's mortal enemy, doesn't lift a finger. Vaggie sings a romantic ballad with Charlie. The fighting is brutal. Adam wipes out Sir Pentious. Lute (voiced by Jessica Vosk) stabs Vaggie in the hand. Alastor barely survives. Charlie's dad saves Charlie from Adam. In an effort to not be as brutal as angelic exterminators, Vaggie lets Lute live. This could prove to be a fatal decision in Season 2. Adam pontificates about how he's "the man" and that they need to bow down to him. So consumed by his own ego, he lets Niffty sneak up on him, then stab and kill him. She's doing what Charlie asked: to stab any angel. She ends up stabbing him repeatedly.



Following this, it seems everything has calmed down. Lute withdraws the angelic exterminators. He's scarred by the murder of his (terrible) boss in front of him. Extermination day is cancelled. While Charlie feels this could have been avoided if she had convinced Heaven to end the genocide, her dad tells her that she has changed history and that her story has only begun. He adds the most important part: she's found the good in souls "turned bad." They begin to repair and rebuild the damaged hotel. Unsurprisingly, Alastor survives, wanting to get out of the deal holding him down. He wants to hold the strings over an unnamed woman (possibly Charlie's mother, Lilith). Emily is excited to see a redeemed Sir Pentious in Heaven.

This series generated a lot of social media chatter. Some people will [continue](#) to hate the series because it is "trendy" to do so, which is understandable since the series had a lot on its shoulders as the most recent indie series [to get](#) on a mainstream platform. This included claiming certain characters were coded as Black and others as White. Since such coding is not directly stated in the series, making such a determination gets into tricky territory.

Such claims [can](#) either be based on stereotypes, faulty information, or reported "afro features," among [other aspects](#). Personally, I'm not going to say a character [is coded](#) unless it is painfully [obvious](#). Otherwise, fans run the risk of reading too much into something or relying on claims based on shaky or unreliable information. Unlike *Helluva Boss* where [the human forms](#) of some demons are shown (in certain episodes), we can't truly say what the race or ethnicity of any character is, if they were in the human world, apart from saying some are "Latin-inspired," and that's ok.

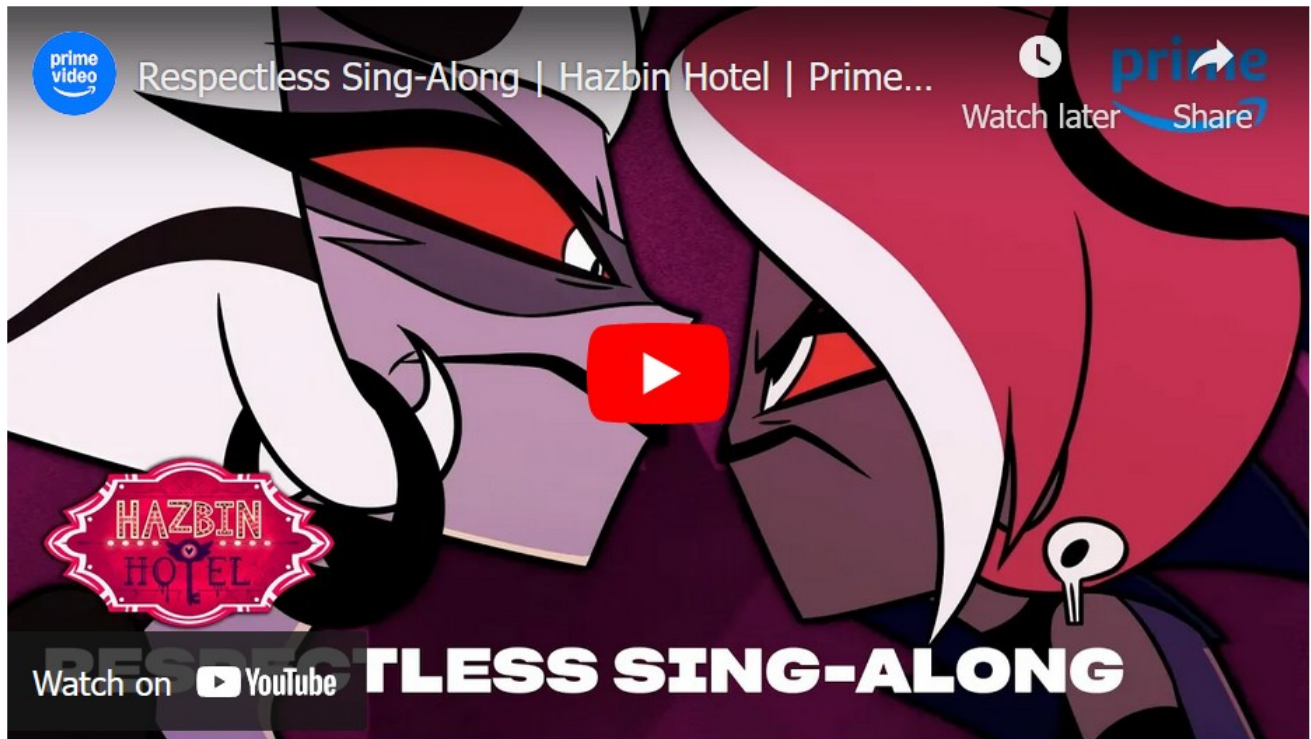
Besides, in Hell, the racial distinctions from the human world don't matter anymore! Instead, Hell has its own races, classes, and societal structure. Often times, characters like Amethyst, in *Steven Universe*, are [racially ambiguous](#). Other tells on racial coding can include a character's [voices](#), mannerisms, specific physical features, who they are based on in real life, where they are from, and [projection](#) by people of color, as [one fan](#) pointed out. This includes some [seeing](#) King Dice in *The Cuphead Show!* as Black, arguing he's based on Cab Calloway and noting that he is voiced by TV host Wayne Brady. However, fans can end up projecting their [own biases](#) onto characters, which makes such coding tricky business. It's hard to say any characters in *Hazbin Hotel* are coded in such an obvious way, unlike Garnet [in Steven Universe](#), for example.

Diversity is built into the series, with voice actors who are Black ([Keith David](#) and James Monroe Iglehart), Argentinian (Stephanie Beatriz), half-Japanese (Kimiko Glenn), Iranian-American (Amir Talai), Mexican/Lebanese (Krystina Alabado), [Filipino](#) (Don Darryl Rivera), half-Taiwanese

(Mick Lauer), Panamanian (Daphne Rubin-Vega), and Indian (Shoba Narayan). Also, Joel Perez and Brandon Rogers are gay and Beatriz is bisexual. Perez is Latino. Rogers is of Filipino, Portuguese, Scottish and Spanish descent. This makes it weirder that some on social media thought that Emily was Black, when her voice actor was born in India, smashing apart claimed coding into a thousand pieces (reportedly based on early production information), showing issues with fan-interpreted-coding.

Overall, I would argue that *Hazbin Hotel* [has stellar animation](#) and is glitzy, but doesn't have [the indie spark](#) of the original. In fact, it seems to be Disneyesque in some ways, especially when it comes to the songs. Even so, the series still carries through. One of my major issues is that the series was far too short. There wasn't enough exploration of the characters. For Instance, I wish that the series had spent more time on the fissure between [Vaggie and Charlie](#). Their conflict was resolved far too quickly.

People often fabricate "facts" about the series to slam it on social media. As a result, I don't trust the series discourse on social media or from holier-than-thou YouTubers. I am really looking forward to season 2, considering possible plot lines. There may be a focus on continued threats from Heaven (especially from an angry Lute); the battle for control between Alastor, Vox, and Valentino; Lilith (Charlie's mother) confronting Charlie and trying to "stop" her (if she can), and Emily fighting to stop the genocide within Heaven itself. After all, as [Medrano put it](#), Hazbin has a "grander narrative with a bigger theme" in comparison to [Helluva Boss](#), which is a smaller-scale story with zanier goals (and is more intimate).



(watch on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOarXIWBtWk>)

The series short-length could be why the writing is occasionally lacking. However, to say that the Vaggie/Charlie dynamic is boring or complain about their "lack" of intimacy is having misplaced character expectations. Not every romantic relationship is the same. Not everyone is as doting and loving with their partners. Some partners are outright abusive and others act more distant. In the case of this series, those who believe that Vaggie and Charlie only act like "friends" forget that asexual people exist, for which sexual attraction may not be a driver. Perhaps other relationships are more "spicy," but this one shouldn't be downplayed.

*Hazbin Hotel* comes out at a time that Amazon is competing with the Disney powerhouse (including Hulu and Disney+), WarnerDiscovery's Max, CBS's Paramount+, Netflix, and to, a lesser extent, Comcast's Peacock. All the while, there oft mistreatment of actors and writers by studios, even with the SAG-AFTRA agreement last year. As Kieran Freemantle noted on February 1, 2024, [on this site](#), the streaming bubble has begun to burst, with the streaming business based on "perpetual growth." The model has become unsustainable.

Although Amazon's Prime Video hasn't made removed content write-offs like Max, it has still removed content nonetheless, and ended series with short seasons. It also ended three animated series in 2022 (*Undone*, *Fairfax*, and *The Boys Presents: Diabolical*). Presently, *Hazbin Hotel* only one of the

four mature animation airing on the streaming service. The others are *The Legend of Vox Machina*, *Invincible*, and *The Second Best Hospital in the Galaxy* (began airing on February 23).

Continued debates about the working conditions of Spindlehorse, the company behind the pilot, this series (as animation series), and *Helluva Boss*, are intertwined with those who detest Medrano and the series. This makes it nearly impossible to determine what information is accurate and which is false. For *Hazbin Hotel*, two other production companies were added: A24 and [Bento Box](#) Entertainment. In the [largely-circulated spreadsheet](#) in which people anonymously described their conditions in animation studios, Bento Box would be described as being a mixed bag with inflexible hours, bad treatment, overwork, disorganization, low pay, and bad supervisors. A24, which only has one entry in the spreadsheet, in contrast to eight for Bento Box, was described more positively. Even so, some described it as having soul-draining work, creatively unfulfilling projects, and disorganization.

Also working on the series, and providing animation services, were Princess Bento and Toon City. Princess Bento is a subsidiary of Bento Box. Toon City is an animation studio located in Manila, Philippines. It has provided animation for *DuckTales*, *Gargoyles*, [Kim Possible](#), and *Lilo & Stitch: The Series*. The other production company, Amazon MGM Studios, formerly known as Amazon Studios, has produced series such as *The Legend of Vox Machina*, *Invincible*, and *The Second Best Hospital in the Galaxy*.

Clearly, *Hazbin Hotel* is not an indie animation anymore. That term means web series, feature films, animated shorts produced outside the major animation studios. Bento Box and Amazon MGM Studios are part of the said industry. Toon City, like Rough Draft Korea, is a studio that receives work [outsourced](#) primarily from the U.S., meant to reduce the cost of animation production. This is done despite language barriers, loss of production value, and [other issues](#). It is hard to determine the work conditions at Amazon Studios or Toon City. The solitary entry for Toon City on the aforementioned spreadsheet notes low pay, bad treatment, inflexible hours, inconsistent projects, and output-based salary, at the very least.

Overall, the series is solid, but could have been much better. Even so, it attracted a huge audience, with fanfiction and [fanart](#) ballooning, and happy fans across social media, while others cull (real or imagined) hatred of the series for their own financial or personal benefit. It makes sense that Medrano [is proud](#) of the series, while calling it a challenge throughout. She also said that she was truly honored that people were enjoying it, and said that work behind it was "immense," with the show's

team "deserves the world." Hopefully, the second season is even stronger than the first, allowing the characters and plot more room to breathe.

*Hazbin Hotel* is currently streaming on Prime Video. The pilot is available [on YouTube](#).



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